

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /069 W
-----064929 251249Z /44

P R 251210Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3036
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 7582

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PK
SUBJECT: POLITICAL SITUATION: INVESTIGATIONS CONTINUE

REF: ISLAMABAD 7497

1. HEARINGS IN CIVIL COURTS AND REPORTS OF FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS BY THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION (MLA) INCREASINGLY INVOLVE FORMER PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO AND MEMBERS OF THE PPP. IRONICALLY, SOME OF THE MOST DAMAGING TESTIMONY SO FAR HAS COME FROM BHUTTO'S POLITICAL ADVISOR GHULAM MUSTAFA KHAR, WHO DIRECTLY IMPLICATED BHUTTO IN THE ILLEGAL DETENTION OF SOME OF HIS COLLEAGUES IN AZAD KASHMIR IN A STATEMENT HE MADE ON JULY 24
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BEFORE A HIGH COURT BENCH. THE STORY RECEIVED EXTENSIVE COVERAGE IN ALL MAJOR ENGLISH AND URDU DAILIES.

2. MUSLIM LEAGUE LEADER CHAUDHRY ZAHUR ELAHI, WHO WAS RELEASED FROM JAIL IN KARACHI ON JULY 23 AFTER ALL CASES WERE DROPPED AGAINST HIM, HAS CHARGED BHUTTO WITH ORDERING HIM ASSASSINATED

ON THREE DIFFERENT OCCASIONS. ADDRTSSING THE KARACHI BAR ASSOCIATION FOLLOWING HIS RELEASE, ELAHI REPORTEDLY STATED THAT THE LAST ATTEMPT WAS MADE IN 1973 WHILE HE WAS BEING HELD RDLLEGALLY IN BALUCHISTAN. ACCORDING TO ELAHI, TWO OF THE MEN HIRED TO ASSASSINATE HIM WERE SUBSEQUENTLY MURDERED TO ELIMINATE THEM AS WITNESSES. FORMER FEDERAL MINISTER J.A. RAHIM AND HI SON, SIKANDER, WERE ALSO FREED JULY 23.

3. WHILE THESE DISCLOSURES WERE BEING MADE, UNCONFIRMED PRESS REPORTS REVEALED THAT THE MLA IS PREPARING TO INVESTIGATE A NUMBER OF FORMER PPP FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL MINISTERS, MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES AND PPP OFFICE BEARERS. IN ADDITION, AN INVESTIGATION HAS REPORTEDLY BEEN LAUNCHED CONCERNING POSSIBLE ILLEGAL EXPENDITURES TO RENOVATE AND EXPAND BHUTTO'S RESIDENCES AT KARACHI AND LARKANA. IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL WHAT USE THE MLA MIGHT MAKE OF ANY EVIDENCE AGAINST BHUTTO OR HIS COLLEAGUES, BUT A MAJOR WATERGATE-TYPE PROBE COULD BE IN THE OFFING. THE LAST OFFICIAL WORD WAS ZIA'S STATEMENT THAT THE MLA WILL INVESTIGATE CHARGES OF CORRUPTION AGAINST POLITICANS AND TURN OVER ALL EVIDENCE TO THE NEXT GOVERNMENT FOR APPROPRIATE ACTION. THERE IS UNDOUBTEDLY PRESSURE ON ZIA TO ARREST BHUTTO, AND AS EVIDENCE AGAINST THE FORMER PM CONTINUES TO GROW AND BECOMES PUBLIC, THE PRESSURES WILL INCREASE.

4. IN AN APPARENT RESPONSE TO THE ABOVE ALLEGATIONS, PPP OFFICIAL
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ORGAN MUSAWAAT REPORTED ON JULY 25 THAT BHUTTO WILL CONTINUE TO SERVE THE PEOPLE WITHOUT FEAR. IN A FRONTPAGE STORY MUSAWAAT QUOTED BHUTTO AS SAYING HIS PAST IS CLEAN AND ALL CHARGES WILL BE ANSWERED AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME.

5. IN A FURTHER EFFORT TO TIGHTEN CONTROL, THE MLA ISSUED FOUR MORE MARTIAL LAW ORDERS ON JULY 22 DEALING WITH PROCEDURES FOR BAIL, SUBMISSION OF PETITIONS AND DETENTION TO PREVENT ACTS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. THE LATTER MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR THE MLA TO IMPOSE RESTRICTIONS REGARDING THE CONDUCT OF BUSINESS, DISSEMINATION OF NEWS OR PROPAGANDA AND FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT. NO GROUNDS FOR IMPOSING DETENTION OR OTHER RESTRICTIONS HAS TO BE GIVEN, BUT APPEAL FOR RELIEF CAN BE MADE TO THE CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR WITHIN TWENTY DAYS.
HUMMEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MARTIAL LAW, POLITICAL REPRESSION, POLITICAL SITUATION, INVESTIGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 25-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ISLAMA07582
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770264-0675
Format: TEL
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770724/aaaaaubx.tel
Line Count: 109
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: afd18264-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 ISLAMABAD 7497
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1762509
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POLITICAL SITUATION: INVESTIGATIONS CONTINUE
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PK
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/afd18264-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009